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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Graz, Austria,
on Wednesday, 29 May 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)

- General exchange of views (continued)
- Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker on my list is the representative of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO). At the end of his statement, there will be a special video presentation on the vital role played by satellite communications and remote-sensing technologies in disaster management. I now invite him to make his statement.

Mr. KRAML (Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO)): It gives me great pleasure to address this meeting on behalf of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. I would like to inform you about the activity of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) in the peaceful uses of outer space, namely in the use of satellites for disaster communications.

Hundreds of thousands of lives are lost and property damage of billions of dollars is inflicted every year as a result of natural and man-made disasters. It is not necessary to go into long-term statistics. We all have still fresh in our minds major disasters that have occurred recently: the drought in the Sahel region, the tragic events of Chernobyl, the severe earthquake in Armenia and Iran, accidents in the Mediterranean Sea, the terrible consequences of war and internal conflict in the Middle East, and the very latest horrifying pictures from Bangladesh, affected by the strongest cyclone to occur over the last 20 years. We seem to have entered into a state of continuous emergency worldwide, with all regions seriously affected by every type of disaster.

(Mr. Kraml, UNDRO)

The United Nations General Assembly resolution of December 1989 that proclaimed the 1990s the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction symbolizes the long-term cooperation within the United Nations family members in the development of an effective application of existing scientific knowledge and technological potential in disaster management. The goals and objectives of the International Decade correspond closely to UNDRO's mandate as the specialized office of the United Nations Secretariat responsible for all disaster-related matters. Its intention is to co-ordinate disaster relief, disaster preparedness and the prevention of disasters.

Activities in disaster management in any area are never isolated but form part of an interdependent framework of actions within a disaster cycle. One of the main tools of disaster management is disaster communications. Early warning and the quick re-establishment of communications are vital to mitigation and relief operations alike in all kinds of disasters. It has become evident that the most important way to cover our communications needs is to use satellite technology. That is also the reason why UNDRO, in addition to its involvement in the International Decade, is also actively participating in the peaceful uses of outer space by the United Nations.

One year ago, UNDRO's representative to the thirty-third session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space reported on the UNDRO 1990 International Conference on Disaster Communications, in which participants from 54 organizations identified the major communications needs of international disaster management and made appropriate recommendations. It gives me great satisfaction to say that, during the past year, UNDRO made great progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference.

Three International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT) Standard-C satellite terminals were obtained thanks to a donation by the Norwegian

(Mr. Kraml, UNDRO)

Government. A training course to operate the Standard-C has already been organized for UNDRO staff and only recently, for the first time in the history of UNDRO, satelllite communications are being used for communication with the UNDRO team in Dhaka because of the completely disrupted communications in Bangladesh by the recent cyclone. An agreement has been made with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on the availability of further satellite, VHF and UHF technology for emergency relief operations. Another agreement on the availability of operators and use of equipment in major disasters was discussed with several organizations owners of INMARSAT Standard-A satellite terminals. A contract on long-term consultancy in the field of communications and remote-sensing control was signed with the Centre for Public Service Communications. And last but not least, UNDRO took part in several conferences, meetings and sessions on disaster communications, either as a participant, co-sponsor, co-organizer or organizer.

I would like to inform the Committee about an important Conference on Disaster Communications organized one week ago in Tampere, Finland, by the International Institute of Communications in close cooperation with several international and United Nations organizations, including UNDRO, ITU and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Conference brought together international experts in both communications and disaster management, who further endorsed the recommendations of UNDRO's 1990 Conference concerning the entry, exit and operation of communications with relief workers in stricken areas, and approved the so-called "Tampere Declaration", which identifies the need for communications and remote sensing in disaster management and calls on UNDRO to convene in 1993 a conference to negotiate an international intergovernmental convention on disaster communications. A copy of the Tampere Declaration will be distributed to the Committee soon.

(Mr. Kraml, UNDRO)

There will be even more events relating to disaster management organized this year in various parts of the world. The Government of China will host and co-sponsor in September the United Nations workshop on space technology applications to minimize and alleviate the impact of natural disasters for the benefit of States Members in the region. INMARSAT will organize in October an international conference on transborder use of mobile satellite terminals, and there will be several regional conferences on the same subjects.

We sincerely hope that the Tampere Declaration, as well as the results of other conferences, will contribute to an international agreement facilitating the entry, exit and operation of communications equipment by relief teams in disaster-stricken countries. Cooperation with the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Secretariat in the final phase of obtaining an international convention on disaster management seems also to be indispensable, and UNDRO will appreciate it very much.

I should like to conclude by wishing all participants in the Committee's thirty-fourth session the fullest success in their deliberations.

There followed a video presentation.

The CHAIRMAN: The video presentation cannot have failed to make a very strong impression on the Committee. Having served in many crisis areas, I must say that I see disaster-relief management as one of the big problems and challenges for our Organization. Because of its relationship to outer space, it should be one of the points that sticks in our minds when we leave Graz.

Mr. LOUHANAPESSY (Indonesia): Let me start by congratulating you, Sir, on your unanimous election as our new Chairman. Like other delegations, I express both the pleasure and the satisfaction it gives my delegation at seeing you presiding over the thirty-fourth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We have no doubt that under your wise and able guidance this session will successfully conclude its deliberations.

We would also like to pay a tribute to the work accomplished by the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Peter Jankowitsch. His more than 20 years of service as Chairman of the Committee have indeed been significant and clearly appreciated by all. I also express my delegation's appreciation for the inspiring statement made by His Excellency Mr. Mock at the outset of this session. The clear sense of direction with which he spoke will undoubtedly serve to assist the deliberations before us.

My delegation sincerely appreciates the contributions that have been made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as well as by the Legal Subcommittee. The extensive and well-presented reports reflect the dedicated efforts of their respective Chairmen; that will undoubtedly contribute to further achievements at this session. And then, of course, I must not forget to thank the Secretariat for its vitally important preparatory work.

(Mr. Louhanapessy, Indonesia)

Less than 18 months into the last decade of the twentieth century, humanity is ever increasing its depth of knowledge, accumulating scientific and technological achievements and broadening its awareness of the evolution of its environment. Coupled with these developments is the growing consciousness of the potential threat that space poses to life on our planet.

Within the short time span of 18 months, this decade has seen remarkably significant developments in many parts of the world, developments that demand a new consensus and a new approach to a future security framework for all nations. Our efforts to safeguard outer space for peaceful uses is, beyond doubt, a crucial aspect of an evolving world order that will surpass the historical framework of the post-Second-World-War era. The international community has indeed expressed its concern for the need to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, taking into account the needs of the developing countries.

And at this juncture, my delegation would like to reiterate Indonesia's basic position that outer space should be used entirely for peaceful purposes and for the improvement of the welfare of mankind. Furthermore, my delegation would reassert that all space activity should be conducted in such a way as to ensure against harming the national interests of other nations.

It is a commonly held view that the peaceful uses of outer space are inseparably linked to the non-peaceful uses and therefore that promoting and strengthening the peaceful uses requires effective measures to prevent an extension of the arms race into outer space. In this connection, my delegation is of the view that every nation involved in space activities should have an exceptionally high degree of awareness of the evolution of our environment. It is indeed of paramount importance that, in every space programme and activity, attention be given to protecting and sustaining the

(Mr. Louhanapessy, Indonesia)

space environment, particularly those elements which affect the Earth's environment.

Accordingly, my delegation is of the view that the process of exchange of information between the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space concerning the non-military use of space could be immediately implemented.

As to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, we are pleased to note the satisfactory work on priority issues, especially on the item on implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. We attach great importance to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, which is intended to organize workshops, training and seminars to assist developing countries in their national educational centres.

I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation for the adoption of the theme fixed for special attention at the twenty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in 1991, namely, "Space technology and protection of the Earth's environment: development of endogenous capabilities, in particular in developing countries and in the context of the International Space Year". The International Space Year will surely provide the hoped-for opportunity to strengthen and expand international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, particularly within the area of primary focus - the use of space technology for studying and monitoring the environment.

In the framework of International Space Year 1992, and noting that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is scheduled for 1992, Indonesia plans, among other things, to complete the planning and preparation for a regional conference on space science and application under the theme "Space technology for sustainable development", to be held in 1993.

(Mr. Louhanapessy, Indonesia)

Indonesia welcomes and fully supports the establishment of a regional centre for space science and technology education. In this context, we have officially submitted our proposal to be the host country for the Asia and Pacific region, especially for remote-sensing education. We have various institutions for research and development, such as the Indonesian National Institute for Aeronautics and Space, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, and the Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology. Educational institutions include the University of Gajah Mada, the Bandung Institute of Technology, and the Bogor Institute of Agriculture. Furthermore, various agencies and private sectors are involved in supporting the application of remote-sensing data. The existing basic hardware is comprised of visual-interpretation equipment, an Earth-resources satellite ground station, weather and environment satellite ground station, data processing systems, and data-bank-user service facilities, which also include basic software.

On the question of the definition and delimitation of outer space, and of the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, my delegation would like to make a few comments. Together with other equatorial countries, Indonesia attaches significant importance to the question of the geostationary orbit. We firmly believe that the discussion on this problem should be continued in the Committee, not only because the matter touches on technical issues, but also because it is also closely related to legal and political concerns. To date, discussions on the definition and delimitation of outer space and the geostationary orbit have not resulted in any significant progress. There is still a difference of views on the need to delimit airspace and outer space, despite the very real features of State sovereignty, territorial integrity and security inherent to the legal regime of airspace.

(Mr. Louhanapessy, Indonesia)

The delimitation of airspace and outer space is, furthermore, a clear necessity for determining the limitations of international space law. While there may not yet be agreed-upon scientific criteria for establishing the specific altitude at which airspace ends, if no agreement is sought then unilateral decisions will abound. This will surely create an unnecessary confusion that is unbecoming to our era of enhanced international cooperation. The geostationary satellite orbit is a limited natural resource of a specific nature and, accordingly, its use should be harnessed justly and rationally for the interests of all countries, taking into view the special needs of the developing countries, including the equatorial countries. Hence, it is imperative that its utilization be based on a specific sui generis legal regime. We deem it important for Member States to engage in genuine negotiations towards arriving at a mutually acceptable solution, taking into account the special requirements of the developing countries and the preferential rights of the equatorial countries.

My delegation has studied the report of the Chairman of the Working Group on the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. We appreciate the considerable work that has been put into bringing the Committee closer to a finalized draft set of principles. We are, however, of the view that principles which have been agreed upon by the Legal Subcommittee should not be discussed again until other principles have been completely discussed.

Indonesia fully supports paragraph 22 of General Assembly resolution 45/72, which requests States to pay more attention to the problem of collisions with space debris and other aspects related to this problem. In this connection, Indonesia welcomes the study on space debris conducted by various Stares and, recognizing that this problem is closely related to

(Mr. Louhanapessy, Indonesia)

protecting and maintaining the environment, we hope that further study on the matter will be continued.

Within the increasing cooperation which the international community continues to develop, the spin-off benefits of space technology are quickly becoming important factors for enhancing the quality of human society. Significant benefits have been achieved in the fields of medicine, industrial safety, manufacturing and construction, and also in the areas of environmental protection and agriculture - even in art preservation. It is a well-established fact that such spin-off benefits are important to the world at large. For this reason, Indonesia would urge continued international cooperation in developing these benefits and the assurance that all countries - particularly those with the greatest socio-economic needs - will have access to them.

Finally, let me conclude by reaffirming our sincere commitment to cooperating with other nations to develop and apply space science and technology for the peaceful uses of outer space. In this regard, Indonesia is committed to taking an active part in finding solutions to the complex challenges of outer space facing mankind.

Mr. MURTHI (India) First of all, Sir, let me convey congratulations to you on behalf of our delegation on your election as the Chairman of the Committee. Moreover, our delegation would like to express deep appreciation and gratitude to the past Chairman, Mr. Peter Jankowitsch, who ably chaired the Committee's sessions for many years and made sterling contributions to the Committee's achievements. The list of his contributions is so long, the extent of his involvement is so intense and the quality of work he inspired in the Committee is of such high degree that any attempt to describe them in a limited timeframe defies a true and total representation of them. We hope that the international community will long have the benefit of his services in different and higher capacities in future. In the best traditions established by our past Chairman, we hope that the Committee continues to progress, displaying dynamism and the true spirit of cooperation in overcoming the challenges inherent in the achievement of its goals. In this endeavour, we are determined to work with you, Mr. Chairman, and we are also sure that your rich experience and past contributions are invaluable assets to bank upon.

As we recall that the Committee is again meeting in Austria, after a gap of seven years, it is hard to ignore the nostalgia of the warm and hospitable environment in which the 1984 Committee session and the two earlier United Nations conferences on outer space were held in Vienna. More notably, the Committee's achievements at those meetings deserve our attention as we determine to enhance the results of the current session.

Please let me also take this opportunity to convey our appreciation and thanks to the Chairmen of the two Subcommittees, Mr. John Carver and Mr. Vaclav Mikulka, who have done commendable work in handling the agenda

(Mr. Murthi, India)

items of their respective Subcommittees during the current year. Moreover, for the efficient and able support extended by the secretariat we should like to commend Mr. Jasentuliyana and his team.

We should like to convey our gratitude to the Government of Austria for extending the invitation for the session to be held here and for all the hospitable arrangements.

In the field of the exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes, steady progress has been noted during the past year, as in previous years. It is particularly noteworthy that the successful launches of several scientific spacecraft during the year have given a tremendous boost to the capacity of scientific observation from outer space. Similarly, there have been important developments in the areas of space technology and applications, including several new launch missions and also work on future space systems. There has also been further progress in the field of human space flight and experiments involving humans in space.

We do not wish to mention each of these individually, as the Committee has had a good overview of such milestones through the remarks of the Chairman and through the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. But we should like to commend the efforts of all the member nations which have contributed further to the development and application of space technology for peaceful uses. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the beginning of manned space flights, we should like to convey again our thanks to the Soviet Union for providing the opportunity for the space flight of an Indian, and extend our good wishes for the continued progress of their programme.

Now permit me briefly to present the status of developments in the exploration and peaceful utilization of outer space in India. The Indian

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multi-purpose satellite system, INSAT I, which has been providing telecommunication, television and meteorological services, has continued through the launch of INSAT I-D on board the Delta 4925 rocket launched from the United States of America last June. The services provided by the INSAT system are well poised to receive a further boost with the expected launch of an indigenously built second-generation INSAT II spacecraft towards the end of this year or at the beginning of next year. Follow-on satellites in this series are planned to provide for the growth in these services.

Turning to another branch of applications, India has been actively pursuing the development and application of space-based remote-sensing technology for the survey and monitoring of national natural resources and for studies relating to the environment. The successful functioning of the Indian remote-sensing satellite IRS IA for more than two years has provided valuable experience in making several beneficial applications operational. IRS IB, which will be the successor to IRS IA, is in the final stages of manufacture, and it is expected to be launched during the latter part of this year aboard a Soviet rocket carrier. There are also firm plans to continue this series through IRS IC and ID satellites, which are being designed and developed. The Indian space programme has also been devoting its efforts in space sciences to a few chosen fields like astronomy and the study of the Earth's atmosphere. Moreover, attention is being focused on contributions to the currently evolving or ongoing global cooperative programmes involving space science and technology. One important programme where such connectivity is maintained relates to the studies on global change. In order to maintain the linkage and exchange of information between the national studies and the Global Change programme, necessary contacts and coordination with bodies like the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) have been established.

(Mr. Murthi, India)

In pursuing all its activities, the Indian space programme has been actively seeking to promote international cooperation. It has cooperative arrangements with several other national space agencies and international organizations. India has also been continuing a programme called SHARES, aimed at providing assistance to other developing countries for training in space applications. In coordination with the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, India co-sponsored and hosted a United Nations/European Space Agency workshop on basic space sciences at Bangalore, India, recently this year. We are pleased to note the very enthusiastic and active participation by a number of international and national participants in this workshop.

(Mr. Murthi, India)

Looking at the work of the two Subcommittees this year, our delegation is pleased to note the intensive and extensive nature of deliberations on a number of items. Although tangible results are still to be achieved on many agenda items, we observe that stronger efforts have been made to reach the goal and to bridge the gaps between the positions of various delegations. We note that space technology and its applications are advancing at a spectacular pace. There has also been growth in the possible benefits of the applications of space technology. In addition, there is increased awareness that the use of space technology is imperative for gathering information and for understanding processes that have linkages at the global level, such as those pertaining to the Earth and its environment.

If the full potential of the benefits of continuous advances that have been taking place in space technology is to be reaped by all nations for solving their urgent problems, it is inevitable that international cooperation be increased. Such cooperation should provide for greater involvement of all countries, particularly the developing countries, and it should facilitate the development of their capabilities for practical and peaceful applications, which can provide solutions to their specific and urgent problems. This implies that greater opportunities be created and that assistance be offered to them in terms of resources, training, and availability of technology and equipment for such peaceful applications. Progress towards such an increased level of cooperation requires the Committee to examine some new initiatives to augment the efforts currently under way within the bilateral and multilateral framework of cooperative activities among member nations and among their institutions.

(Mr. Murthi, India)

To assist in this process, information provided by some of the member countries and international organizations in response to the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee could be useful to this process. Moreover, the results of the studies conducted from time to time, based on the recommendations of that Working Group, could be of great value.

The United Nations Programme on Space Applications has been playing a very useful role in organizing training and promoting human resource development in the developing countries in the field of space technology and its applications with the active support and contributions of several member countries. A logical step forward is to strengthen that programme by forging cooperation in some space applications projects in the developing countries.

If our aim is rapidly to develop capabilities in space technology and its applications for peaceful uses in the developing countries, as stressed by UNISPACE 82, increased involvement and the need to organize concrete projects cannot be overstressed.

Another front on which we need to make progress concerns the further extension of space law, with a view to promoting international cooperation intensively. The concrete proposals made under item 5 of the Legal Subcommittee's agenda during its last session deserve our serious consideration and support.

On earlier occasions our delegation has also stressed the need for the Committee to consider the ways of preserving the outer space environment so as to permit its future use by all countries effectively for peaceful beneficial applications. All delegations share the concern about the problem of debris

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in outer space. We are also aware that studies are being carried out in several countries regarding this problem and the possible measures to overcome it. We further note that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its last session agreed that information on national research in space debris might be provided to the Subcommittee. Noting the importance of developing international cooperation in addressing several issues related to this subject, we reiterate the urgency of considering this subject in the Committee so that these deliberations can proceed concurrently with the studies at the national level, as is usually the case with respect to other agenda items.

Finally, we should like to turn to the developments that could turn outer space into an arena for military competition and confrontation. We view these as serious impediments to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. We have been voicing our serious concern in all the relevant forums about the dangers of the escalation of an arms race into outer space, and we reiterate the urgent need to check it so that outer space is maintained for peaceful purposes always. We are also aware that the subject of the prevention of an arms race is being considered by the Conference on Disarmament. The Committee has been considering as a priority item the ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. We reiterate that efforts in the two forums should proceed in a complementary way. There have been differing positions in the Committee on how to deal with this agenda item, and we have been unable to make much progress. Nevertheless, as the subject of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes is a priority agenda item, it is important that we identify and promote further work on those issues related to the subject where there is some common ground.

(Mr. Murthi, India)

We look forward to participating further on specific issues relating to the Committee's agenda when they are taken up for discussion.

Mr. BOYER (France) (interpretation from French): The delegation of France cannot fail to begin its statement without paying a sincere and warm tribute to Mr. Peter Jankowitsch, who so effectively and so outstandingly guided the work of the Committee for several years. The regret the Committee has in seeing him leave is, however, tempered by the satisfaction at seeing you succeed him, Mr. Hohenfellner - a high-ranking diplomat of exceptional quality who, moreover, has the advantage of being Austrian.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to thank the Vice-Chairman and the secretariat for the work they have carried out and the commitment they have shown in helping the Committee to accomplish its task.

(Mr. Boyer, France)

The work done this year by the two Subcommittees, particularly in nuclear safety, can be considered satisfactory in general, although no tangible progress has been made. Indeed, in an organization where consensus is the rule it is important properly to identify and assess any obstacles blocking agreement - and, in the view of my delegation - in-depth work on existing problems was quite satisfactorily carried out this year. It is by moving forward step by step that we can reach agreement, for quite often the consequences of acting hastily soon become apparent. And because the road is long, it is important, when the goal is achieved, not to go back on what was mutually agreed after lengthy discussions; otherwise, there might be a breakdown in the climate of trust which must prevail within our Committee.

In this spirit of consensus, the French delegation, together with several other delegations, took the initiative of making proposals on principles 4, 8 and 9, that could well garner a consensus; we hope that these efforts, particularly concerning principles 8 and 9, will lead to conclusive results in the near future.

With regard to the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, the French delegation wishes to highlight its participation in encouraging such activities both bilaterally - primarily through the cooperation efforts of the National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) - and multilaterally, in particular, within the European Space Agency (ESA), which is a valuable partner of the United Nations in the framework of its Space Applications Programme. France welcomes the proposal made by the Working Group of the Whole that the Secretariat should draft a report on the arrangements concluded with other United Nations bodies and agencies to use available resources fully.

(Mr. Boyer, France)

In the development of space activities, France is making a significant contribution to ESA. In this spirit, it would like to stress the importance of the upcoming ministerial conference of the member countries of ESA, to be held in Bonn from 20 to 21 November 1991. The discussion will focus not only on the major European programmes, the Ariane V launcher, the Hermes spacecraft and Columbus, the European contribution to the international space station, but also on the contribution of space technology to the environment and Earth monitoring, a concern that is to be addressed by the upcoming launching of the European remote-sensing satellite ERS 1.

As 1992 will be International Space Year, the French delegation expresses its satisfaction at the pace taken by the Space Agencies' Forum for the International Space Year, the quality of the meetings that were convened under its auspices, the last of which was held in Moscow in mid-May, the growing number of their participants and the relevance of the projects prepared by that Forum with the assistance, inter alia, of France and the member countries of ESA as a whole. It is also very encouraging to note that the United Nations has joined these efforts in a spirit of harmonious cooperation.

Lastly, France would like to see the same level of cooperation maintained, and the rules we have set for ourselves followed. That is the way for us to continue to move forward - the fervent wish of the French delegation.

Mr. SERRANO de HARO (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of my delegation, may I first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your

(Mr. Serrano de Haro, Spain)

election to the chairmanship of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and thank the members of the Committee for enabling Spain to take part as an observer at this thirty-fourth session. Through you, we would also like to extend our thanks to the authorities of Austria and the beautiful city of Graz for their warm welcome. Finally, I should like to join with all those who have expressed their appreciation for the excellent work carried out by Mr. Jankowitsch in the two decades he chaired the Committee.

Spain has followed with interest the 1991 meetings of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. Those meetings not only provided a valuable exchange of views but also made possible progress on some of the items before us. One of the pillars for our work is, no doubt, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, which not only provides the basis for discussions in the Legal Subcommittee but also identifies such new problems as the serious problem of space debris and promotes international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space, while acting as an important forum for cooperation.

Spain attaches great importance to international cooperation in this field, and we should now like to give a few relevant examples. On 10 June in the Maspalomas Space Station in the Canary Islands, we will be holding a seminar on microwave remote-sensing technology for States Members of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia, under the auspices of the United Nations, ESA and the Food and Agriculture Organization. This will be the third time that the Maspalomas Station has hosted a United Nations meeting.

(Mr. Serrano de Haro, Spain)

Spain also attaches particular importance to United Nations programmes for the International Space Year. Spain's participation will essentially be channelled through the European Organization for the International Space Year (EURISY), in cooperation with the State bodies involved in promoting space research for information, technology and applications in relation to environmental conservation and more effective use of natural resources. Lastly, another project that will soon be initiated is the development of the HISPASAT communications system, which will make possible a significant increase in telephone and audiovisual links between Spain and Latin America.

At the thirtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee, two new documents were introduced which are being carefully studied by my country. I am referring, of course, to the draft principles on international cooperation in the exploration and utilization of outer space and the so-called informal working paper on the geostationary orbit. My delegation hopes to be able in the near future to contribute actively to the discussion of both subjects.

As to the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, I should like to recall the importance Spain attaches to this subject. My delegation is aware of the complexity of the two main aspects of these draft principles: on the one hand, the establishment of criteria and safeguards for the safe use of nuclear power sources; and, on the other, the establishment of a mechanism on liability and compensation. Nevertheless, we regret that negotiations did not lead to sufficient progress at the thirtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee.

I cannot conclude this brief assessment without referring to a proposal made by one delegation on international legal aspects relating to the

(Mr. Serrano de Haro, Spain)

future use of space systems. This approach seems to recognize the fact that, apart from the question of whether or not it is necessary to define and delimit outer space, it is very difficult to establish criteria for doing so and that, consequently, it would be appropriate to find other ways of resolving problems that might arise in connection with this issue.

(Mr. Serrano de Haro, Spain)

Finally I wish to congratulate the Secretariat on its report on spin-off benefits of space technology, which highlights the importance of such benefits and notes that insufficient use is made of them, while giving us very interesting examples.

At the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly my delegation stated its interest in becoming a full member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In his closing statement the Chairman of the Special Political Committee reiterated that interest. And before concluding I wish again to reaffirm that position, in the hope that we can count on the support of the members of the Committee.

Mr. LAVIÑA (Philippines): My delegation warmly congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Your diplomatic skill, knowledge and vast experience assure us of a productive and successful stewardship. We share all the congratulatory wishes extended to you by previous speakers. We look forward to seeing you hold the Chair for the next 20 years at least. Nevertheless, without alluding to some assumptions within the Committee, we anticipate that a diplomat of your calibre seems destined sooner rather than later to occupy higher posts in his Government.

In that regard, we commend your predecessor, Mr. Peter Jankowitsch, for his great contribution to the Committee, and we wish him well in his recent appointment as Minister of State in the Austrian Government. We likewise join in the richly deserved tributes paid him by our colleagues.

The Philippines notes the progress made earlier this year by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, chaired respectively by Mr. Carver of Australia and Mr. Mikulka of Czechoslovakia.

(Mr. Laviña, Philippines)

Our country regards outer space as the common heritage of mankind. As such its exploration and utilization must benefit all peoples. As a signatory to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, the Philippines is deeply committed to preserving outer space for peaceful uses. We totally oppose the militarization of outer space and the extension of the arms race to that environment, particularly at this juncture of history when we have learned and seen how such hazardous activities on Earth have brought us only misery and destruction.

The Philippines maintains that it is indeed essential to elaborate legal principles and norms and to establish legal instruments to regulate activities in outer space in order to maintain its peaceful nature. More important, however, we believe that intensifying cooperation in the application of space benefits will in the long term help preserve outer space for peaceful uses. Cooperating nations and peoples, which share responsibility for outer space, have so much at stake in its peaceful exploration and use that they should work harder to ensure that the peacefulness of outer space is not disturbed by man's folly.

Nine years ago, Austria hosted the historic Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82), which drew up solid recommendations for cooperation in the exploration and use of mankind's last frontier. My delegation holds the view that the full implementation of these recommendations remains important in our collective search for ways and means to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes. We have always stressed that the speedy implementation of the decisions of UNISPACE 82 will have a substantial impact on the development process under

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way in countries such as the Philippines which rely heavily on scientific and technological advances derived from outer space. In particular, we fully endorse the report of the Working Group of the Whole to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifth session. My delegation appreciates the quality of the reports prepared by the Secretariat regarding the status of the implementation of the various recommendations of UNISPACE 82. We likewise concur in the Working Group's decision to make a comprehensive assessment of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 as part of International Space Year, which coincides with the tenth anniversary of UNISPACE 82. For our part, we shall continue to sensitize the nucleus of agencies and institutions involved in space science and technology in our country, including the policy- and decision-makers, to the wealth of data on space science and technology available through the United Nations system and other international and non-governmental organizations.

In all these efforts we stress the central role of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in enhancing the capabilities of developing countries in space-technology applications. Despite the Programme's meagre resources, it has continued over the years to provide long-term if limited fellowships, short-term workshops, seminars, meetings of experts and technical advisory services to developing countries. My delegation is happy to note the efforts of the Outer Space Affairs Division to develop an international space information system, including both information within the United Nations system and access to external data bases. We likewise look forward to the establishment of regional centres for education in space science and

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technology in existing national or regional educational institutions in developing countries. We hope the proposed centre for our region will soon be operational.

Let me reiterate a number of concerns we have over matters relating to remote sensing. As we have stated repeatedly before the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Philippines is committed to cooperating with like-minded States in fully maximizing the operational potential of remote sensing technology.

We hold the view that since access to data is highly dependent on the presence of ground receiving stations, existing ground receiving stations must be transformed into a network in which they could be interconnected and interrelated through wire or radio links. That can be done on a regional basis, so that data reception can be properly coordinated among stations that have common areas of coverage. The Philippines considers it necesary to determine the possibility of providing data access by using existing telecommunication facilities for secondary reception of data from the nearest ground receiving station.

(Mr. Laviña, Philippines)

The Philippines views with concern the commercialization of remote sensing activities, which has a negative impact on developing countries. Like other developing-country users, we hope the cost of remote sensing products can be kept within reach with reasonable assurance of continuity of supply. We urge satellite owners to reduce significantly the price of remote sensing data products and access fees to make them affordable to developing countries. As a first step, we request satellite owners to charge reception fees on the basis of the quantity of data received, and not as flat rates.

We reiterate our earlier recommendation that future designs of satellite systems should consider the present capabilities of existing ground receiving stations to ensure reception of the same type of data and to prevent problems related to updating stations for new systems. That would ensure the technical compatibility and complementarity of various components. Cooperation in that regard could be fostered through regular meetings among satellite operators, ground station operators and users.

The Philippines shares the international concern over the hazards to man and his environment of unplanned reentry into the Earth's atmosphere of malfunctioning space objects with nuclear power sources on board. My delegation is following with deep interest the deliberations on the elaboration of principles regarding the use of nuclear power sources in outer space in the relevant working groups of the Committee's two Subcommittees. Despite the progress achieved during the 1990 on reaching consensus on draft principle 3, "Guidelines and criteria for safe use", and the general agreement reached on the remaining draft principles 2, 4, 8, 9, 11 and 12, we join other delegations in expressing regret that during its 1991 session the Working

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Group was not able to reach consensus on a complete set of draft principles. I believe that regret was expressed also by the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Jankowitsch. While we understand the ongoing debate on several definitional issues, including the definition of a launching State, and on the scope of the liability convention, we - again, like several other delegations - do not see the need for the proposal to "revisit" draft principle 3, since a general agreement has been achieved on general goals for radiation protection for States launching space objects using nuclear power sources and guidelines for the operation of nuclear reactors and radioisotope generators in space.

My delegation is concerned too over problems relating to collisions with space debris and other aspects of space debris, and we fully concur with the view that it is important to develop improved technology for monitoring space debris and compiling and disseminating data on space debris. We therefore strongly support and endorse the proposal to consider this subject in the future deliberations of the Committee.

We reserve our right to make further comments on the reports of the Subcommittees, and we hope to do so as these agenda items are taken up.

Before concluding, I should like to emphasize the difference that sharing the benefits from space could make to the marginalized, impoverished sector of society that makes up the majority of those who inhabit the Earth. Many countries members of the Committee, the spacefaring nations, have the capabilities and resources to share those benefits. We urge them to do so. We must no longer exacerbate the physical problems we have created for our planet with the political, economic and social imbalances that have caused the great divide between the haves and the have-nots.

(Mr. Laviña, Philippines)

Finally, on behalf of the Philippine delegation, I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the people and the authorities of Graz and to the Austrian Government for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements they have kindly provided. We are indeed happy that these meetings are taking place in this lovely city of Graz, whose charms have already captured the hearts of us all.

Mr. FIGUEIRINHAS (Portugal): Let me start off, Sir, by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the Committee. I am sure you will successfully continue the task that for the past 20 years was carried out so well by Mr. Jankowitsch.

During recent years Portugal has treated with the utmost seriousness matters concerned with outer space in general and specifically matters related to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In Lisbon the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a department specifically occupied with matters related to outer space. The Ministry provides daily transmission of information between the capital and our Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York.

Apart from that diplomatic channel, I should like to refer to the national department dealing with questions related to outer space, the National Committee for Scientific Investigation and Technology. The President of our National Committee works under the direction of our Secretary of State for Science and Technology. The department has dealt in the best possible manner with all questions related to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I should like also to note that our Secretary of State for Science and Technology has recently nominated a team of eminent experts as national delegates to follow the work of this Committee.

(Mr. Figueirinhas, Portugal)

The implementation in Portugal of the priority recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) has been mainly focused on the development of national capabilities and expertise in specific areas of the peaceful use of space so that Portugal will be able to take an active role in the development of international cooperation activities with developing countries.

Among the areas that have been the object of more intensive activity, that related to the use of remote sensing data captured by satellites deserves special mention. Since 1986, a significant effort has been under way towards the development of a national data bank within the purview of the National Geographic Information System aimed at the establishment of a network of national geo-referenced data bases linking together cartographic data banks, satellite imagery and statistical and descriptive information related to specific locations in the country. That is in reference to recommendation (b) of paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 45/72.

In the context of remotely sensed data, several national centres and institutions have expanded their activities concerning the systematic use of satellite data. Among these, I shall mention the following:

The National Meteorological and Geophysical Institute has for the past 10 years systematically used satellite imagery obtained from meteorological satellites for its daily forecasts.

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The Scientific Tropical Research Institute, with long experience in and a tradition of engaging in cooperation activities related to tropical research with developing countries, has initiated several projects on the use of the Global Positioning System for geodesy purposes and of satellite imagery for the production of basic and thematic cartography.

The SATCART consortium - involving the National Laboratory of Industrial Engineering, the Electronics Research and Development Corporation and GEOMETRAL - was begun in 1987 and has been actively developing significant projects on the use of remotely sensed data for several types of applications concerned with agriculture.

The Oceanography Group of the Lisbon Faculty of Sciences has been using remotely sensed data from meteorological satellites for sea studies including study of upwelling phenomena, the identification of the best locations for fisheries exploitation and sea-water pollution characterization involving modeling the propagation of oil spills in the ocean.

The National Civil Engineering Laboratory has more than 10 years of experience in the use of remotely sensed data applied to natural environmental characterization and land use assessment.

The National Geographic Information Centre, as the coordinating agency of the National Geographic Information System, recently created a group devoted to the study and application of satellite imagery in environmental characterization, land use assessment and agriculture applications. It is currently involved in several projects.

More recently, the National Geographic Institute and the Army Cartographic Service started important projects on the use of satellite imagery in the production and updating of cartographic maps.

(Mr. Figueirinhas, Portugal)

Following the intensive activities carried out in Portugal in the years since UNISPACE 82, new prospects have been opened in Portugal regarding the implementation of cooperation activities with developing countries. Indeed, within the curricula of existing courses and training activities now offered in Portugal, the integration of specific courses on the use of satellite imagery has already been implemented by the Meteorolgical Institute, the Scientific Tropical Research Institute, the National Geographic Institute, the National Civil Engineering Laboratory and the National Geographic Information Centre.

Besides those education and training activities, a signfiicant expansion of activities of cooperation with developing countries is expected for the next decade, focused on the use of remotely sensed data captured from outer space. The opportunities for the development of such cooperation activities will be directly related to the specific programmes of the various Portuguese institutes I have mentioned, which have been developing their experience and expertise on the use of remotely sensed data.

It is also the intention of the Portuguese Government to launch the Portuguese satellite PSAT-1, to be positioned in a polar orbit for the study of a remote sensor to be installed on board as well as to encourage the development of communications among university institutions of Portugal and developing countries.

I should like to conclude by stating that Portugal intends to continue to follow with the utmost interest the activities of this Committee and to make the most of the position we now hold in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Ms. VAJIC (Yugoslavia): The Yugoslav delegation is participating with pleasure in this general exchange of views, to stress the importance of the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space and the significant role played in that field by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

My delegation wants to extend to the new Chairman, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner, our warmest congratulations on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee and our best wishes for success in his work. I should like also to put on record our special appreciation of the devoted work carried out by the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Peter Jankowitsch. We hope his very inspiring opening statement and the fact that this session is taking place in the pleasant, hospitable and relaxed atmosphere of the city of Graz will significantly contribute to the success of the thirty-fourth session of the Committee.

For years the Committee has been attentive and responsive to the needs of the international community in all aspects of the peaceful uses of outer space. That was proved by the adoption of a number of documents, most of which have had a strong impact on international relations. But that is not the only weight and leverage of this Committee. With its two Subcommittees, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, it is a unique international forum for the extensive exchange of views and experiences in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. There is no doubt that many ideas and opinions expressed in this body over the years have provided a major impetus to continued efforts in the space field.

As in the past, the agenda for this year's session of the Committee has been very broadly conceived and includes the most important issues of concern

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to member States. Accordingly we deem it appropriate that the General Assembly has requested the Committee to consider as a matter of priority ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

My delegation believes that this issue is closely linked to the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all States, taking into account the needs of developing countries. In that context, the working paper submitted by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Uruguay and Venezuela (A/AC.105/C.2/L.182) on principles regarding international cooperation in the exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes is surely an important proposal that should receive the Committee's special attention. At the same time, however, my delegation holds the view that the development of international legal cooperation alone should not take the front seat. The developing countries are vitally interested in organizational and technical cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space that might be beneficial to their development in the immediate future.

If any priorities are to be identified, the well-known demands for continued exchange of information, data, materials and equipment on space science and space technology should, in our view, be supplemented by the promotion of easy and low-cost accessibility and availability of remote sensing data. Only in such favourable circumstances can the developing countries be expected to benefit from space technology for their more rapid development.

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My delegation also approves of the timing of the inclusion in the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the item entitled "Applications of airborne and satellite remote sensing for prospecting mineral and groundwater resources and for monitoring biological resources, with emphasis on agriculture, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries". The possibilities and benefits of such uses of space technology are best illustrated by the workshop sponsored by the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation. Both of them deserve special credit for organizing the workshop.

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As far as the redistribution of the spin-off benefits of space science and technology and related cooperation are concerned, all these principles will fail to have any more meaningful effects unless there is a consensus on the concrete implementation and operationalization of different forms of cooperation and unless appropriate modalities can be devised to finance international cooperation, taking special account of the needs of developing countries. Therefore, in order to enable those countries to benefit in the foreseeable future from the space research and technology that is applicable to virtually all the important fields of their development, efforts should be continued to find new solutions and to elaborate further some of those already proposed.

Matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character of the geostationary orbit are among those to which the Committee has devoted great attention in recent years. In considering the complex nature of the definition and delimitation of outer space and the related issue of State sovereignty, we deem it very useful that item 4 of the Legal Subcommittee's agenda has been divided so that its two main aspects can be discussed separately. We only hope that that division of work will lead to constructive discussions on the question of the geostationary orbit in the Legal Subcommittee. Because this matter is of great practical importance to all States, involving as it does a limited natural resource, my delegation is of the opinion that the work on the question of the geostationary orbit should be intensified, taking into account, however, the important work done by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in the regulation of the geostationary orbit.

With regard to the preparation of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, we share the opinion expressed here by

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many other delegations and hope that the existing controversies over pending issues can be resolved. Given the need for legal regulation of the use of this particularly dangerous source of energy, we share the view that there is an urgent need to unblock the work on this matter and to accelerate it to the maximum degree possible in order to reach a consensus.

My delegation would also like to reiterate once again its support for the other activities of the Committee and other bodies associated with it that have not been mentioned here.

Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) and 1992 will also be proclaimed International Space Year. That occasion offers us an excellent opportunity for yet another thorough review of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and for redoubling our efforts to implement them.

Yugoslavia is doing all it can to promote those principles and recommendations. As a traditionally open country, it cooperates on several space projects currently under way in Europe and is seeking to make the most of them. For example, there is increasing integration with respect to direct radio and television broadcasting, including both direct reception of satellite signals by individual antennae and broadcasting of its own programmes. In this respect I should like to say that until a few years ago there were only several hundred individual antennae in Yugoslavia, as compared to some 80,000 today. As for the broadcasting of its own programmes, Television Belgrade has recently started to broadcast its radio and television programmes via satellite, EUTELSAT I F4. These broadcasts can be received in most of Europe.

Mr. OBAKPOLOR (Nigeria): At the outset I wish to convey, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as the new Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to succeed your compatriot, the distinguished retiring Chairman, Mr. Jankowitsch of Austria. Your election is eloquent testimony to your vast diplomatic experience and outstanding credentials as well as to the important role that your country, Austria, is playing in the Committee. Austria and Nigeria have enjoyed years of excellent relations, and my delegation will cooperate fully to ensure the success of your tenure.

My delegation welcomes the report of the twenty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, held in New York under the chairmanship of Professor Carver of Australia, from 19 February to 1 March 1991; the report is contained in document A/AC.105/483 of 5 March 1991. We welcome also the report of the thirtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee, held under the chairmanship of Mr. Mikulka of Czechoslovakia from 25 March to 12 April 1991, also in New York; this report is contained in document A/AC.105/484 of 17 April 1991.

The outcome of the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee this year again imbues us with the need to enhance the effectiveness of the working methods of this vital subsidiary body of the Committee. In this vein it is vital that that Subcommittee be enabled to carry out its mandate as well as to tackle freely whatever agenda items are assigned to it.

The twin questions of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the coordination of space activities within the United Nations system, as well as implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, continue to engage our attention as priority questions. In the past we have stated our

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position regarding the need for providing adequate financial resources for the Programme on Space Applications under the Outer Space Affairs Division, as well as broadening and enhancing bilateral and international cooperation to make space technology available to all countries. We reiterate those views once more and welcome some of the promises of voluntary contributions in 1991 to the Programme on Space Applications, notably from Austria. Positive suggestions, which we support, were also made by some delegations concerning cooperative activities in shared payloads, dissemination of information on spin-off benefits, ensuring the compatibility of the space system and providing access to launch capabilities at reasonable costs; these suggestions are reflected in General Assembly resolution 45/72 of 11 December 1990.

Remote sensing of the earth by satellites represents a key area; its applications to the vast sphere of the socio-economic development of developing countries can hardly be quantified. For meaningful international cooperation there is a need for the provision of appropriate and non-discriminatory assistance to meet the defined needs of the developing countries in this crucial area. This calls for remote-sensing data and analysed information to be made available to all countries at reasonable cost and in a timely manner, as well as for the ensuring of continuing free access to data from operational meteorological satellites.

We are all aware that the issue of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space generated a rather lengthy discussion at the twenty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in February; this arose mainly out of a working paper submitted by the United States delegation calling for a review and revision of draft principle 3, which concerns guidelines and criteria for safe use and which was already agreed to in 1990. We support the

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view that the agreement already unanimously secured by all delegations last year should not be reopened, for otherwise there may be no end to the process. However, if some latest developments could positively enrich or update the agreed text, my delegation would favour their incorporation into the text.

(Mr. Obakpolor, Nigeria)

It is increasingly clear that the question of space debris cannot be separated from the need to safeguard our global environment against pollution. Just as the release of various toxic gases and chemicals into the atmosphere rightly deserves our concern over environmental pollution, the presence in space of over 6,000 satellites on various missions at any time and the proliferation in space of attendant debris from those missions should also rightly engage our serious attention. When we realize that a single space launch could leave thousands of highly destructive fragments behind in orbit, the potential hazards of accidents with consequences for the contamination of outer space and the terrestrial environment, so intimately joined - indeed inseparable - cannot be underestimated. Unfortunately, there has been some procrastination in addressing this worrisome question, including the compilation of and access to necessary data on space debris, as well as the need for the tracking and monitoring of the space-debris environment. Nigeria feels that it is high time that the issue of space debris were made a distinct agenda item for the examination of a working group under the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and we shall support necessary action by other delegations to that end.

Turning to the report of the thirtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee, the Nigerian delegation continues to believe that the letter and spirit of the 1967 Treaty on outer space, as well as relevant international law and treaties and conventions on the peaceful uses of outer space, should continue to be respected and inspire us in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The basic principle enunciated in the preambular paragraphs of the 1967 Treaty relate to ensuring the common interest of all mankind and

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benefitting all peoples, irrespective of their degree of economic and scientific development, to the need to broaden international cooperation in both the scientific and legal aspects of the exploration and uses of outer space, and to the development of mutual understanding and the strengthening of friendly relations between States and peoples. Those cardinal principles underline the peaceful uses of outer space and our work here. Logically, that implies the non-militarization of space and the need to avert the danger of extending the arms race into outer space. However, some space-bound military programmes and some major Powers' research and development activities that are oriented towards the warfare capabilities of space-based weapons cannot but give my delegation some concern within the context of recent developments in some parts of the world. The Committee can successfully discharge its mandate to safeguard outer space for beneficial peaceful exploration and the use of mankind only if the major space Powers respect the need for the exclusively peaceful use of outer space.

With regard to the preparation of the remaining draft principles on the use of nuclear power sources, my delegation regrets that no agreements could be reached on principles 2, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 12, although some of these agreements have been within easy grasp since the past few sessions. We hope that the delegations that have impeded progress on those principles will limit the unnecessary introduction of new elements and amendments into existing texts so that we can conclude the item in the near future. In this connection my delegation expects a strong pronouncement from the Committee on the direction to be taken by the 1992 session of the Subcommittee dealing with this question.

(Mr. Obakpolor, Nigeria)

Our position on the definition and delimitation of outer space has been stated in the decade during which this question has been on the agenda. We note that the same irreconcilable positions continue to be held. That is why we are favourably disposed to attempts to break the deadlock, particularly the proposal by the USSR to start exchanging views as of 1992 on the international legal aspects of the future exploration of aerospace systems, with a view to a better understanding of the need to draft the necessary legal rules for regulating flights in space. However, like others my delegation believes that there is a need for a clear understanding of what the proposal implies and hopes that the USSR delegation will throw more light on this aspect during the present session.

The Group of 77's working paper on the character and utilization of the geostationary satellite orbit represents a very positive outcome of the discussion of the issue at the thirtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee, given the polarization of the past few years with regard to the approach to be taken and the principles involved. The developing countries' widespread acceptance of the paper is a departure from the past and will no doubt contribute to the outcome of future debate on the item.

My delegation commends the highly informative study (A/AC.105/486) made by the Secretariat on the spin-off benefits of space technology. Today, the spin-off benefits of space technology constitute the single most important linkage in space matters between the vast majority of mankind, which has no direct access to space science, and the few that have such access. Even in the technologically advanced nations it is a fact that space science and technology can be meaningful to the common people in the street only if they relate to the advancement of the human and material development of societies.

(Mr. Obakpolor, Nigeria)

The thousands of spin-offs of commercial products and processes created in the adaptation of new aerospace technology to take advantage of market opportunities constitute improvements in the quality of life, result in modernization of the electronic industry, greater efficiency in communication and increased human knowledge and lead to accelerated over-all socio-economic progress in many spheres, including health and medicine, public safety, transportation and domestic utilities that directly touch on the lives of millions of people globally.

Stretching these limits of technology, raising the global consciousness of peoples and bringing the benefits of space exploration to the doorsteps of all peoples call for the strengthening of international cooperation to ensure that such spin-offs will have a particular relevance in addressing the needs of the poor and the technologically disadvantaged developing countries. The importance rapidly acquired by such benefits calls for the concrete development of international assistance and for ensuring that the developing countries have easy access to these spin-offs. Areas of cooperation should also embrace internationally manned space flights for shared exploration and knowledge, joint scientific research involving biological satellites and the provision of launching services to foreign countries and international organizations under mutually acceptable terms. The working paper which was submitted by some developing countries during the thirtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee and in which my delegation participated highlight these and other areas of cooperation. We also welcome the organization of the Workshop on Basic Space Science for the Benefit of the Developing Countries - held at Bangalore, India, from 30 April to 3 May 1991 - aimed at strengthening basic space science, national capabilities and scientific cooperation in the

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developing countries, as well as the creation of an international core group of scientists for follow-up action. We look forward to more regular seminars on spin-off benefits for the developing countries as part of the Programme on Space Applications.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to a successful thirty-fourth session of the Committee in Graz on these important questions. We also look forward to the 1992 International Space Year and its contribution to the strengthening and expansion of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Through the inclusion of all States in the activities of International Space Year, it is our hope that a sound basis can be laid for bringing developing countries into the mainstream of space science and technology under the themes of common benefits, international cooperation and sustained development.

Mr. LOWELL (United States of America): I should like first of all to extend the United States delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Certainly Austria's willingness to make you available for this important post is a great tribute to the importance your Government assigns to the work of the United Nations in this field. I might add that it is also a source of satisfaction to all delegations present here who have benefitted from your past leadership and involvement with the Committee. May I extend our appreciation at this stage as well, through you, to Foreign Minister Mock and to all of the Austrian authorities involved in the superb arrangements for this session. Finally, I would also like to express our sincere thanks to Mr. Jankowitsch for his many years of distinguished service to the Committee.

We are meeting in a period in which political and social changes continue to infuse a sense of optimism into our work. As prospects for East-West cooperation improve in various fields, opportunities for broadening and deepening cooperation by all nations in outer space can only expand as well. During 1991 we have observed some quite encouraging signs of these opportunities, particularly in the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, whose recent session addressed a full range of international space activities, such as International Space Year 1992. That session was also quite rich with technical presentations and discussions on a number of important questions by leading experts from developing countries as well as from industrialized countries. Such developments reinforce our view that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has indeed been on the right track in recent years in seeking to strengthen the scientific and technical

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underpinnings of its work. At the same time, we need to continue to reorient the Committee's discussion away from extraneous issues, such as disarmament, for which it plainly has no mandate.

This afternoon we will begin consideration of agenda item 6, "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". In our session we have already heard disparate views on where opportunities for progress may lie. On Monday we listened very carefully to the announcement made by the representative of Chile concerning his Government's decision to act as host to the second Space Conference of the Americas. The United States welcomes that development. We participated actively in the first Conference held at San José, Costa Rica, in 1990, and we were very impressed with the results. The conference in Chile could certainly mark an important advancement in regional cooperation, a field of study that the Committee has been advocating continuously over the past decade, at least as long ago as the UNISPACE 82 conference. I suggest that at this session we assess carefully how to lend appropriate support and encouragement. I note in this respect that the Committee held a useful initial discussion on this area at its 1990 session. At that time we agreed that the Space Conference of the Americas was an important example of efforts to broaden and deepen cooperation.

On the other hand, we would not agree that the disarmament aspects of outer space represent in any sense a promising area for discussion in the Committee. There is no scarcity of multilateral forums where disarmament matters can and are being discussed. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is not and should not be one of them. Rather, within the United Nations that responsibility lies with the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. The Committee on the Peaceful

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Uses of Outer Space, on the other hand, provides a focal point for international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. Its mandate is that of the only standing committee of the General Assembly concerned exclusively with international cooperation in the use and exploration of outer space. In our opinion - one that we have reiterated many times - it is by serving as a protagonist for cooperation in this area that the Committee can make an effective contribution to the maintenance of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The Committee has long agreed that strengthening international cooperation in the exploration of outer space also implies the need for the Committee and its Subcommittees to improve, wherever necessary, the methods and forms of their work. We therefore agree fully with the recommendation made yesterday by the representative of Japan that a working group should be established to review the methods and procedures of the Committee and its Subcommittees.

Although we have not made the sort of real progress required to put the Committee and its Subcommittees on the most businesslike footing, some progress has been made, particularly in addressing the perennial problem of the Legal Subcommittee's organization of work. We would therefore like to applaud the action taken by the Subcommittee in agreeing to some specific measures that will improve the efficiency of that body. It is certainly a good start. My delegation is also pleased that discussions will continue at this session with a view to reaching agreement on the venue of subsequent meetings of the Legal Subcommittee, taking into account General Assembly resolution 44/201 B. We understand there are different views on this question; however, we feel that the General Assembly's clear policy with

(Mr. Lowell, United States)

regard to meetings at Headquarters is something that needs to be taken into account as we consider whether a continued exception to that policy is warranted. Our view at this stage continues to be that the United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was correct in recommending that the Legal Subcommittee cease its practice of holding alternate sessions in Geneva.

While I am on the subject of the Legal Subcommittee, allow me to say a brief word about the elaboration of draft principles regarding the safe use of nuclear power sources in space. I want to reiterate the interest of my Government in working with other delegations to bring the negotiation of the full set of principles to a prompt and satisfactory conclusion. I define a satisfactory conclusion in this respect as one that ensures the highest degree of safety in regard to the use of space nuclear power, consistent with the need for clarity and unimpeachable technical content in areas related to design criteria for safe use. That is why it is disappointing to us that some delegations appear to misunderstand the changes my delegation has proposed to draft principle 3. As you know, we have urged certain changes to the draft principle that, in our opinion, are necessary and that will serve to enhance its technical strength. We have done so because we take the Committee's work in this area very seriously and because we believe the concerns we have identified are sufficiently important to require modifications to the draft text before it is submitted to the General Assembly. We now hope that delegations who also take those principles seriously will be prepared to take our concerns into account and work constructively with us in shaping a final text that will enjoy a high degree of credibility and the broadest possible support internationally.

(Mr. Lowell, United States)

Finally, regarding the issue of space debris, we agree that it is an issue of concern to all nations interested in the exploration and use of outer space. That is why we continue to support vigorously the conclusion contained in General Assembly resolution 45/72. Therein, the General Assembly found it essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions with space debris, as well as other aspects of the problem.

(Mr. Lowell, United States)

The General Assembly also called for the continuation of national research on this question. United States authorities are devoting substantial effort and resources to research into this area. We also believe, as some have suggested, that space debris could be an appropriate subject for future discussion by the Committee, but we are not persuaded that that time has arrived.

That concludes my initial remarks. I will have more detailed comments to make on these and other matters as we proceed through the agenda.

The CHAIRMAN: The last speaker for this morning's meeting is the representative of the Holy See, and I now invite him to make his statement.

Mr. HAUPT (Holy See): As a representative of the Holy See, I am pleased and thankful to be able to address this meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

The Holy See, although of no military or economic power, is thoroughly interested in the peaceful uses of outer space. Following the message of Pope John Paul II calling for the peaceful behaviour of man in all regions of our planet Earth and its vicinity in space, the Holy See wants to strengthen human responsibility for God's creation. The work of the Committee towards that goal is respectfully appreciated. The Holy See welcomes all efforts that have been undertaken so far, especially by the countries Members of the United Nations. I have been particularly instructed to express full agreement with all steps the Committee has taken to avoid military activity or nuclear armaments in space, as well as to solve the problem of space debris.

Although the statements made over the past two days have informed us of spectacular progress in space research, one has had the feeling that much emphasis has been placed against something, like the dangerous consequences of

(Mr. Haupt, Holy See)

space contamination. That is certainly good and necessary. But should it not be possible, by making even more concentrated efforts, to avoid such danger from the very outset? Through the international cooperation offerred in this Committee an agreement among all the contributing nations and agencies should be sought to increase competition for a clean, peaceful and even helpful outer space.

The Holy See wants to encourage all sorts of projects that are of importance to the welfare of the human race and especially to the developing countries. Although full exploration of the universe is a formidable task for all of us, the benefits to be gained from the respectful utilization of outer space are at least equally essential to mankind.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: This afternoon we will conclude our debate on agenda item 5. We will then begin our consideration of agenda item 6, "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". I would urge delegations wishing to speak on that item to inscribe their names with the Secretariat. I would also ask delegations that wish to make changes in the provisional list of participants to submit those changes in writing to the Secretariat by noon tomorrow, 30 May.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.